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To: Damon Doumlele <Damon\_Doumlele@nps.gov>

09/21/2010 04:12 PM

cc

Subject: Comment to ORVAC members and FACA web page

Hello Committee members,

I have included for reference purposes a recent email sent by Superintendent Ramos of Big Cypress National Preserve that I was included by c.c. Certain parts of this email seriously concern me and hopefully will concern all ORVAC members after I explain my concerns.

Factor #1 that Pedro explains (**highlighted in red below**) that will be used to determine what portion of a secondary trail leading to a camp will be accessible to the public as I have interpreted it worries me, since it is alluding to NPS staff making judgements for visitors as to where GOOD camp, hunt and hiking sites are. The intrinsic qualities of any place in the Preserve a visitor desires to visit are judged by those who go to them on a very personal basis. With all due respect to Pedro and NPS staff I do not believe any NPS staff person is particularly qualified (especially regarding hunting) to make decisions on these 3 issues on behalf of anyone except themselves. More simply put the qualities of any part of the Big Cypress are in eyes of he or she who behold them whether on a primary or secondary trail or anywhere within its boundaries.

I would further hope that the ORVAC committee would decline any offer for them to become involved in such personal decisions dictating the qualities of certain areas of the Big Cypress to strangers.

I know this may seem like a minor -in the weeds- issue by some since the Superintendent's remark is made in reference to secondary trails to camps but this could turn into a precedent Preserve wide through time in my humble opinion.

Remember that when the discussion of how far an ORV can pull off a trail to set up camp, park etc. that the discussion quickly gravitated towards some form of designated campsites for ORV's in the back country which well could be a preliminary precedent to designated camping for everyone w or w/o ORV's. That issue remains un-resolved and could probably go either way depending on the committee's attention to it.

My recommendation to resolve this situation is that - An ORVAC recommendation be adopted and forwarded to the Superintendent that neither staff or the ORVAC become involved in decision making regarding these 3 very personal issues anywhere in the Big Cypress.

One other concern this email caused me is Pedro's inviting concerned parties for private meetings. My concern is **not** about an NPS Superintendent having private/informal meetings but rather that the public Nationally archived record of this process will not include a record of what happens in these meetings as to what ideas transpire and who is the source of whatever

miscellaneous ideas arise or the fact that they even happened . This is supposed to be a public process - all of it -.

My recommendation to resolve this concern is that - The ORVAC forward to the superintendent a recommendation that some sort of record of private meetings could be included in the document list under a heading such as "Informal Meeting Notes". These notes could include at least the names of parties attending an "Informal Meeting" and a list of specific topics discussed. By doing this folks who attend most public meetings would have a chance of understanding where - new ideas that may totally surprise them - emanating from (Informal Meetings) that may seem to have been pre-screened, get into a public meeting agenda with a head of steam behind them.

I would suggest the committee can adopt these recommendations as their own since all have expressed a desire that this process be transparent. Even if I had a meeting with an NPSSuperintendent I would appreciate it being publicly reported in some manner because all concerned parties who invest time in this process deserve to know everything good or bad. This would also further enhance Pedro's reputation as a good NPS superintendent in my opinion.

Frank Denninger

#### **Reference E-mail Below**

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Lyle,

This is a good discussion that I appreciate. Three important factors used to determine whether and how far would a secondary to a private camp be open for recreation are: **1. Is it a good destination for camping, hunting, hiking, photography, etc..** 2. Is there a good place to turn around before one gets to the private property boundary (this will most likely drive the decision as to how close to a camp) and 3. Is it a good trail in an area open for ORV use (meaning that secondaries to camps that are within a closed area would not be open for recreation but rather, exclusively open for us to meet the requirement of providing reasonable access to that property owner).

Thank you and please let me know whether you and perhaps others may want to stop by the office to personally discuss some of the topics you have been raising for discussion most recently. I find the personal conversations to be much more productive.

Pedro

Pedro Ramos  
Superintendent  
Big Cypress National Preserve

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Sent from my Wireless Handheld